

Applicant: Jeffrey George
Serial No.: 10/661,390
Group Art Unit: 3714
Examiner: Sara Sarkhili

Remarks

No new matter is added by this amendment. The present application was filed on September 12, 2003 with original claims 1-48. By this amendment, 1-2 and 26-27 have been amended. The claims remaining in consideration are claims 1-49 of which claims a and 26 are independent. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 6-27, and 31-48 were rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by US Patent 6,267,671 issued July 31, 2001 to Nicholas Hogan ("Hogan"). This rejection is respectfully traversed. Independent claims 1 and 26 have been amended to more clearly identify the subject matter applicants regard as the invention.

Hogan provides an automated comp rating system and method for accurately determining a player's gross wagers at a live table or card game. The Hogan system includes a computer located at the table and a decoder for sensing each player's wagers. The system records the wagers and determines a gross session wager for each player for the time the player is playing at the table.

With respect to vouchers, Hogan states:

"In order to encourage higher gross levels of wagering by players, casino operators often extend complimentary goods and services to players in exchange for more active wagering. This is conventionally known as "comping" and the casino operators award players "comps." "Comps" can be any redeemable forms of currency and/or currency equivalent typically issued (for promotional purposes) by casinos to their players in exchange for active, table game patronage. Such "comps" include points, club points, premium points, player club points, coupons (e.g., free meals, free shows, free gifts, etc.), comp dollars and/or any other form of redeemable coupon, voucher, cash rebate, good or service."

Thus, in the Hogan system, casino operators give players "complimentary goods and services" to the players. The "comps" can be currency or equivalents, or a redeemable voucher, or coupon.

Amended independent claim 1 sets forth a remote system for use with a gaming system for implementing a player tracking system. The remote system includes a remote device and a host computer. The remote device is embodied in a handheld computer which may be carried by a user. The host computer includes a remote network interface

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coupled to the remote device via a wireless connection for exchanging data between a host computer and the remote device. The data includes player identification information entered by the user on the remote device and sent to the host computer, a list of vouchers for which the corresponding player has enough comp or bonus points to purchase to the remote device from the host computer, a selected voucher sent entered by the user on the remote device and sent to the host computer, and voucher information to issue the selected voucher to the player in the player tracking system, the selected voucher having at least one of an associated product or service.

Amended independent claim 26 sets forth a method for implementing a player tracking system for use with a gaming system. The method includes the steps of providing a remote device embodied in a handheld computer which may be carried by a user, providing a host computer coupled to the remote device via a wireless connection, and sending a fillable form to the remote device from the host computer over the wireless connection; filling out the form with player identification information, by a user, on the remote device and sent to the host computer over the wireless connection. The method further includes the steps of sending a list of vouchers, for which the corresponding player has enough comp or bonus points to purchase, to the remote device from the host computer over the wireless connection, sending a selected voucher entered by the user on the remote device and sent to the host computer over the wireless connection, and issuing the selected voucher to the player, the voucher having at least one of an associated service and product.

Hogan does not teach or suggest, using a remote device “embodied in a handheld computer which may be carried by a user”, as required by independent claims 1 and 26. Nor does Hogan teach or suggest sending a list of vouchers to the remote device “for which the corresponding player has enough comp or bonus points to purchase” and sending “a selected voucher” back to the host computer, as required by independent claims 1 and 26.

Since Hogan neither teach or suggests all of the elements of amended independent claims 1 and 26, applicants respectfully assert that the §102(b) rejection thereof is improper and must be withdrawn.

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Amended dependent claim 27 further defines the “selected voucher” as being a paper voucher printed on a remote printer carried by the user, and/or a pre-printed voucher having a voucher ID number which is assigned to the players, and/or an electronic voucher embodied in a record stored in a database.

Hogan makes no such teaching.

Dependent claims 6-25 and 31-48 are ultimately dependent upon either allowable independent claim 1 or allowable independent claim 26. Therefore for the reasons set forth above, and based on their own merits, applicants respectfully assert that claims 6-25 and 31-48 are also allowable.

Claims 2-5 and 28-30 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hogan. This rejection is respectfully traversed. Claims 2-5 are ultimately dependent upon allowable claim 1 and claims 28-30 are ultimately dependent upon allowable claim 26. Therefore for the reasons set forth above, and based on their own merits, applicants respectfully assert that claims 2-5 and 28-30 are also allowable.

All of the Examiner’s objections and rejections having been successfully overcome and/or made moot, applicants respectfully assert that the present application is in condition for allowance.

Applicant believes that no additional fees are due, however, if any become required, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account 08-2789 in the name of Howard & Howard Attorneys, P.C.

Respectfully submitted

HOWARD & HOWARD ATTORNEYS, P.C.

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Date

/James R. Yee/
James R. Yee, Registration No. 34,460
The Pinehurst Office Center, Suite #101
39400 Woodward Avenue
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48304
(248) 723-0349